

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 4-12 are pending. Claims 4, 7 and 11 have been amended to more clearly and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicant regards as his invention. No new matter is believed to be added by the present amendment.

The specification has been amended to replace the "a connection coming from the server..." with "a connection coming from the server..."

Objection to claims 5 and 7

Responsive to the objection, claim 5 has been amended to recite "... terminal of a user ..." and claim 7 has been amended to recite "... using said user addresses."

Rejection of claims 4-12 under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by DeWeese et al (US Pat Appln No 2005/0262542)

Applicant submits that for the reasons discussed below amended claims 4, 7 and 11, and the claims that depend therefrom, are not anticipated under 35 USC 102(e) by DeWeese et al.

The present invention provides a system that allows connections between users to be managed anonymously, in part by, not transmitting addresses and establishing communications through a server. In that regard, Claim 4 has been amended to recite:

- establishing a communication between said first user and said second user through the server, the **address of the first and second users not being transmitted to any other user.** (emphasis added)

Support for the amendment is provided, for example, on page 5, lines 24-26 ("The user's address is not transmitted to the other user: unless the users decide to exchange their addresses, they stay anonymous."). Applicant submits that DeWeese fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-emphasized limitation of amended claim 4.

DeWeese discloses a television chat system that allows television viewers to engage in real-time communications in chat groups with other television viewers while watching television programs. The real-time communication and chat requests are handled by a chat server that allows communication between several viewers. As shown in Figure 4, a user can enter profile data including the user's name. DeWeese discloses on column 7 paragraph 85:

“the chat system may send the second user a message indicating the first user has requested the second user's profile information. If the second user accepts the request, the chat system allows the first user to add the second user to his buddy list so that he can have access to the second user's profile information and can initiate chat sessions with that user. In addition, the chat system may ask the second user if he wishes to add the first user to his buddy list. The chat system may also allow users to search for chat buddies based on a user ID number, an e-mail address, TV program preferences, and/or other preferences.”

In view of the above, according to the system of DeWeese a user can know the identity of the other user (see also §95 page 8).

“The chat system may be configured so that a user can append another user in a chat group to his buddy list or address book by selecting that user's nickname (or icon) in the chat group.”

Therefore, the above-mentioned feature of the amended claims, that is, establishing a communication between said first user and said second user through the server, the address of the first and second users not being transmitted to any other user, is not disclosed in DeWeese.

This feature allows the communication between two users to be kept anonymous. This advantage is well described in the present specification, for example, page 2 lines 17-19 : “An advantage of the present invention is that the connected users do not need to know their respective identities, i.e. the chat may remain anonymous”.

DeWeese does mention maintaining anonymity of communication on Page 6 paragraph 76:

"The user may also enter a nickname for himself in box 133. A nickname may be used for anonymity in a chat group or as a creative pseudonym related to the chat topic. Alternatively, screen 120 may provide the user with an opportunity to enter an icon that identifies the user in the chat room rather than a nickname."

Therefore, DeWeese teaches using a nickname or an icon by a user, but DeWeese does not disclose or suggest a solution wherein the server establishes communication between two viewers without transmitting the addresses of the users. With the present invention, the connection is established through the server and anonymity is guaranteed because a user cannot retrieve the address of another user. As described in the specification, "When one of the users wants to stop the communication, he interacts with the terminal's user interface. The terminal sends a message to the server to stop the connection. The server sends a disconnection message to the different users and closes the connection." page 5, line 30 - page 6, line 2. This shows that the server controls the communications, and that the communication between the users must pass through the server.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that DeWeese fails to disclose or suggest each and every limitation of amended claim 4, and as such, claim 4, and the claims that depend therefrom, are not anticipated by DeWeese.

Claims 7 and 11 have been amended to include similar limitations in the context of a server device and a television terminal, and is believed to be not anticipated by DeWeese for at least the same reasons as those discussed above with respect to claim 4.

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Having fully addressed the Examiner's rejections it is believed that, in view of the preceding amendments and remarks, this application stands in condition for allowance. Accordingly then, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited. If, however, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at (609) 734-6815, so that a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview may be scheduled.

Respectfully submitted,
PHILIPPE LETELLIER ET AL.

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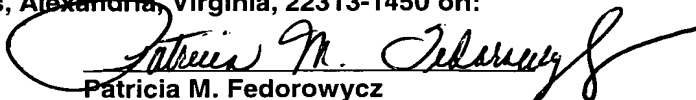
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I hereby certify that this amendment is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, Virginia, 22313-1450 on:

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Patricia M. Fedorowycz